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RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 5531
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SUBJECT: JAPAN TELLS IRAN TO "ACT RESPONSIBLY" ON GAZA

Classified By: Ambassador J. T. Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Japanese Foreign Minister Nakasone in a January 7 telephone conversation told Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki that Iran, as a regional power, needs to act responsibly to help bring an end to the violence in Gaza. According to MOFA Second Middle East Division Principal Deputy Director Yukiya Hamamoto, the telephone call was initiated on short notice by the Iranians, and Mottaki began by condemning Israel's assault on Gaza and the deaths and injuries suffered by innocent civilians. Mottaki told Nakasone that it is imperative that Israel immediately halt its attacks and open Gaza's crossings. He told Nakasone that as a member of the Security Council, it was incumbent upon Japan to "act responsibly" to bring an end to the fighting.

2. (C) Nakasone replied that Japan, too, greatly regrets the ongoing violence and the casualties being suffered, but, according to Hamamoto, reminded Mottaki that the fighting was triggered by Hamas, which started things by firing rockets at Israel. Turning Mottaki's words back on him, Nakasone told him it was incumbent upon Iran to "act responsibly" as a regional power to do all it can to stop the violence. Nakasone added, said Hamamoto, that it is also imperative to establish a sustainable peace, not a temporary one. Nakasone referred to the financial contributions Japan is making to address humanitarian suffering and also reviewed for Mottaki the political steps Japan has been taking, including personal engagements by both the Prime Minister and himself with counterparts in the region.

3. (C) Hamamoto told us that conversations with Iran on Gaza may or may not continue, but regardless, Japan is firmly lined up with the United States on this issue. He said he imagined it was difficult for Mottaki to listen to what Nakasone had to tell him, and that all Mottaki could do was to reply "Iran will act responsibly as a regional power."
SCHIEFFER